TO

ARTHUR GORE, Esq

Relating to the

Present Abuse of spirituous Liquors; and a Method to remedy the Evil:

BY

WILLIAM HENRY, D.D.F.R.S.

—— Let some Prophet, or some sacred Sage,
Explore the Cause of great Apollo's Rage,
And learn the wasteful Vengeance to remove.

POPE's Hom

Τῶ γάρ κεν ἔπειτα Θεὸν ἱλασσάμενοι περ
Κάλλιπε γὰρ Ἀπόλλων, ὅτι οἱ ἱερὰ διεσσεύατ' ἀρῆται.

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DUBLIN:

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BRITISH MUSEUM

LETTER, &c.

SIR,

IT muſt yield the ſincereſt Joy to every true Lover of *Ireland*, to obſerve it earneſtly recommended to Parliament from the Throne, 'to take 'into their particular Conſideration what 'further Laws may be neceſſary for the 'Improvement of our Commerce, and 'Inland Navigation; for the Advance-'ment of our Linen and other Manu-'factures, and for the Encouragement 'of the Proteſtant Charter-Schools.'

It muſt greatly heighten this Joy, to ſee the worthy Repreſentatives of this loyal and public-ſpirited free Nation, laying aſide all Diviſions, uniting themſelves in a noble Emulation to carry on, with Spirit, every uſeful Improvement in a Country which is ſo happily formed by Nature; that, by its Rivers, Harbours, Soil, Mines, and Manufactures, it is capable of being ſoon made one of the richeſt and pleaſanteſt Countries in the whole Earth.

This is true *Patriotiſm*; Poſterity will feel the Benefit, and many Generations yet to come will call the preſent *bleſſed*.

As, among theſe true Lovers of their Country, you, Sir, have diſtinguiſhed yourſelf, by your Attention and Earneſtneſs in recommending and promoting uſeful Arts; and in inveighing againſt, and, with all your Might, endeavouring to remove ſuch pernicious Abuſes as ſtand in the Way of every Improvement. I am, from ſuch public Virtue, encouraged to make my Addreſs to you, that you would ſtir up, and animate, all your noble Compatriots 'to uſe every 'Endeavour to remove from us, or at 'leaſt abate, that infernal Plague of '*ſpirituous Liquors*, which blaſts every 'uſeful Deſign, deſtroys our Manufac-'tures, and is continually laying waſte 'our Country.'

'What avails it, though we had the Strength and Spirit of *Hercules*, if we are wrapt up in ſuch a fiery Garment? It muſt conſume us!

It would be but a Waſte of Words, at this Time, to undertake to prove to you, that the growing Abuſe of *ſpiritu-*

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ous Liquors has already nearly extirpated, out of the Minds of our common People, all Senſe of Religion, Virtue, and Modeſty; has often heated them to a Degree of Madneſs to commit Riots, Theſts, Robberies, and Murders; draws on our Manufacturers into Habits of Idleneſs and Incapacity for Labour; enervates and diſſipates the Courage of our Soldiers; and, to ſum up all, deſtroys the Lives of ſeveral Thouſands of his Majeſty's Subjects in this Kingdom every Year.

Theſe fatal Effects have been ſufficiently explained in the Addreſs already publiſhed againſt *ſpirituous Liquors*, and in many other Treatiſes on the ſame Subject. Nay, what is more wofully convincing, they are every where felt among us; the Plague continually ſpreads, the Deluge ſwells every Year more and more; and, unleſs the Wiſdom and Virtue of our Legiſlature give ſome Check to it, the Remedy may come too late.

When an infectious Diſtemper ſeized the black Cattle in *England*, not only public Payers were ſolemnly offered up in all Churches to remove the dire Calamity, but Acts of Parliament were paſſed, and

and executed with the utmoſt Caution and Attention, to prevent the Diſeaſe from ſpreading; and, in this Kingdom, ſo ſeaſonably provident were our Repreſentatives, as to paſs a Law to prevent the Importation of any Kind of Package which might bring over the Infection; by which early Precaution we have, thro' God's Protection, eſcaped that ſore Calamity unto this Day.

And when this unhappy Infection of drinking *ſpirituous Liquors* ſeized the Populace in *England*, the Wiſdom of the *Britiſh* Legiſlature, ever watchful for the public Safety, quickly provided Laws to remedy the Miſchief in Part; which, tho' not adequate to remove the whole Evil, yet have already had a conſiderable Effect, as I have the Honour to be informed in a Letter from that great Philoſopher and Lover of Mankind, Dr. *Stephen Hale*, who ſolicited theſe Laws.

And ſhall we have ſuch Inſtances of a tender Care for Beaſts, and forget the Care of Men? It is impoſſible. Shall the *Britiſh* Parliament provide ſuch ſeaſonable Laws for the Preſervation of their People, and we not take the Hint, when

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the Neceſſities of our Country call more loudly on us?

The *Iriſh* Houſe of Commons hath been famous for public Spirit and Love to their Country, and hath often taken the Lead, in difficult Times, even of that of *Great-Britain*, in the glorious Cauſe. In this Caſe, ſo neceſſary to the Preſervation of our Country from utter Ruin, I am confident that every Member in your honourable Houſe would proceed with Unanimity and Ardour, provided a Method for effecting a Cure might be found out, which did not interfere with the Intereſts of his Majeſty's Revenue, the Tillage of the Kingdom, or the Commerce of *Great-Britain*.

How difficult ſoever ſuch a Remedy may appear at a Diſtance, yet I hope to make it plain to you, that ſuch a Method is moſt eaſy and practicable. Nay further, that, by the Wiſdom of our Houſe of Commons, (in Imitation of the Wiſdom of Providence, which bringeth Good out of Evil) Matters may be ſo ordered, that this great Evil may be converted to the great Increaſe of the Revenue, the Tillage and Commerce of

Ireland,

Ireland, and Advancement of the public Intereſts of *Great-Britain*.

This will appear, if we look into the principal Cauſes of the Miſchief at preſent done by ſpirituous Liquors. For every wiſe Phyſician will proceed to the Cure of his Patient, by knowing, and removing, the Cauſes of the Diſeaſe.

Theſe Cauſes appear to me to be the three following.

I. 'The preſent Uſe of *ſmall Stills*.'

Moſt of the Stills, at preſent in Uſe, contain about ſixty or ſeventy Gallons; ſome of them much leſs. In Conſequence of this Indulgence, the loweſt, nay, the very Dregs of the People, are enabled to ſet up Stills in all little Market-Towns, and other Places. In theſe, without much Preparation, they run off ſuddenly a fiery Spirit, not made altogether of Grain, but with a Mixture of filthy, nay, poiſonous, Materials. It may be made to appear, that, in ſome of theſe, there hath been uſed human Ordure; and what is far worſe, *Nux vomica*, and *Rats-bane*, in order to extract the Spirit, and give to it the greater Pungency.

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By Means of theſe Stills, the Spirit is drawn off ſo expeditiouſly, that the Diſtillers evade the Vigilance of the moſt active Officers of Exciſe; and the King is ſo greatly defrauded in his Revenue, that the Tenth Part of the Duty is ſcarcely paid by ſuch Diſtillers; by which Means the fair Diſtiller is underſold, and rendered utterly unable to carry on his Buſineſs.

Of the Truth of this we have the cleareſt Evidence in this; that in all thoſe Diſtricts, where ſuch Stills abound, and ſcarce any other Liquor than this fiery Whiſkey is known, the Revenue continually decreaſes; in many of them the whole Exciſe is not ſufficient to pay the common Officers. While ſuch Stills are permitted, one would think, that we had adopted the old *Spartan* Policy, to reward our People for ſtealing, provided they did it dexterouſly.

If a Stop were once put to ſuch ſmall Stills, the certain Conſequences would be theſe; the Spirits diſtilled in large Stills (which could only be ſet up by Perſons of ſome Fortune and Character) would be much better, and free from poiſonous

and filthy Materials; his Majeſty could not be defrauded in his Revenue, as ſuch large Stills require a large Apparatus and Time to ſet them a going; and ſuch fair Diſtillers would no longer be under the Temptation of concealing their Spirits, as now they are, from the Frauds of the low Diſtillers; the Poor of the People would not drink ſo largely of Spirits, as they could not be ſo eaſily come at; and all the preſent ſmall Stills would immediately be employed in the Brewing of Ale, a wholeſome and nouriſhing Liquor, and a Liquor which could not be concealed.

Secondly, and, indeed, the moſt immediate Cauſe of all the preſent Miſchief, is, the Toleration of *low Retailers*. Theſe Wretches ſerve to the low Diſtillers as Receivers do to the Thieves, and are the great Debauchers and Corrupters of the Populace.

The Practice at preſent is thus:

In the Skirts of our Market Towns, or in all the Roads leading to them, the worſt of People, ſuch generally as, by their Drunkenneſs, have reduced themſelves to Beggary, and are incapable, or unwilling,

unwilling, to work, open their Cabbins for ſelling ſpirituous Liquors, in like Manner as worn-out Strumpets become Bawds.

There are ſuch Multitudes of theſe Traps in all our Towns, or on the Roads to them, that a Perſon muſt have more than ordinary Circumſpection or Reſolution to eſcape being enſnared in one or other of them. In theſe accurſed Neſts of Vice honeſt Paſſengers are intercepted, the Manufacturers are drawn off from their Markets, the Price of their Manufactures is ſpent, their Families are impoveriſhed. Here Servants are debauched, our young Spinners firſt made drunk, and then made Harlots; Thefts and Robberies are hatched, and the moſt furious Riots and ſhocking Murders committed almoſt continually; ſo that, in ſome Places, our Country is a Field of Blood. Nor is the Revenue, in any Way, advanced by this Price of the People's Virtue and Blood; for Licences to theſe Retailers are granted at as eaſy Rates, as the mendicant Friars uſed formerly to ſell the Pope's Indulgences. Nay, not one in twenty of theſe Retailers takes out any Licence at all. Were

Were theſe low Retailers reſtrained, and the ſelling of ſpirituous Liquors put under due Regulations, more than two thirds of the preſent Evil would be remedied.

The laſt Cauſe I ſhall mention of the preſent Deluge of ſpirituous Liquors overflowing us, is the Want of ſome Encouragement, or Draw-back, on the Exportation of home-diſtilled Spirits.

Such a Draw-back is allowed on the Exportation of *French* Brandies; and it is moſt ſtrange Policy, that it is not allowed alſo to our own Spirits; one ſhould think, we ſhould rather favour the Children of the Kingdom than its profeſſed Enemies. For Want of ſuch an Encouragement, our Populace are tempted to conſume the very worſt of our Spirits at home, though *Death be in the Pot.*

But were this Encouragement allowed us, the following Advantages muſt ariſe from it.

Our Spirits, being made better, and becoming a Staple Commodity, 'would 'not be of ſo hurtful a Nature when 'duly tempered, and kept to a proper 'Age.' 'They would not be drank

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'ſo largely by the common People,' as the foreign Demand muſt raiſe the Price. 'Tillage might then be ſucceſsfully car-'ried on in all the inland Parts of the 'Kingdom,' as Spirits may, at a ſmall Expence, be carried to the Market, tho' Grain cannot.

And if once we heartily ſet about Tillage, this Country, ſo fruitful in its Soil, might ſoon become the Granary of other Nations, inſtead of expending yearly 200,000 *l.* for Bread from abroad. 'Our Commerce would be enlarged.'

The preſent Courſe of Trade is to ſend out our Ships to the Northern Kingdoms empty, carrying nothing with them but Money, and bringing home Timber, Flax-ſeed, and naval Stores; by which Method our Country is drained of its Coin, which, like the Blood circulating in the human Body, is the Life of Trade; and we pay double Freight for theſe neceſſary Commodities: But were we allowed this Encouragement, we ſhould ſave this great Loſs in Trade; and our Commerce to *Newfoundland*, and all the northern Kingdoms, would be greatly enlarged.

I own

I own that we could not hope for this Benefit, if it did, in the leaſt, interfere with the Diſtillery of our Mother Country. But the Caſe is quite otherwiſe. The *French*, the inveterate and hereditary Enemies of *Great-Britain*, are, at preſent, in Poſſeſſion of this Trade; and, by means thereof, perhaps have no ſmall Influence in the Counſels of ſome of theſe northern Crowns, the Effects of which *Great-Britain* too often feels. But were it permitted to us, as all the Inhabitants of thoſe northern Kingdoms prefer our Malt Spirits to the *French* Brandies, we ſhould ſoon beat our Enemies out of this beneficial Branch of their Trade; and bring a new Acceſſion of Wealth and Power to *Great-Britain*; as all our Riches muſt ultimately terminate there.

From what hath been offered, concerning the Occaſions of our preſent Evil, you will perceive, Sir, that the Remedy, to a principal Part of it, is obvious, and eaſily put in Practice.

I will therefore take the Liberty to offer to you theſe three ſhort Regulations, which your Experience and public Spirit, in concurrence with the Wiſdom of the Nation, may improve more perfectly.

Firſt,

First, That from the Day of no Still ſhall be permitted for the Diſtilling of ſpirituous Liquors which ſhall contain leſs than two hundred Gallons; yet, that every Perſon, who is at preſent in Poſſeſſion of any Still of leſs Contents, may, until the Day of which ſhall be in the Year of our Lord 1757, make Uſe of the ſame for the Brewing of Beer or Ale, provided he firſt breaks to Pieces the Head of the ſaid Still, in the Preſence of the Officer of Exciſe in the Diſtrict.

Secondly, That from the Day of no Perſon whatſoever ſhall be permitted to ſell or retail any Kind of ſpirituous Liquors in any leſs Quantity than two Gallons, until he or ſhe hath firſt given ſufficient Security to the Juſtices of the Peace, at the Quarter Seſſions, for his or her orderly Behaviour; and, after obtaining a Certificate of this Security, ſhall take out a Licence from the Collector or Sub-commiſſioners of the Diſtrict, for which Licence he or ſhe ſhall pay no leſs than the Sum of Five Pounds *ſterl.*

That if any one ſhall ſell ſpirituous Liquors without firſt giving ſuch Security, and taking out a Licence, or, having obtain'd ſuch Licence, ſhall be convicted of diſorderly Behaviour, he or ſhe ſhall, upon ſuch Conviction before two Juſtices of the Peace, or at the Quarter Seſſions, forfeit to his Majeſty the Sum of Ten Pounds; whereof one Moiety ſhall be paid to the Informer, and the other to the Collector, for the Uſe of the incorporated Society for promoting *Engliſh* Proteſtant Working-Schools in *Ireland*; and that all Perſons ſo convicted, who ſhall not pay the ſaid Fine, ſhall forthwith be impriſoned until the next enſuing Aſſizes, and then tranſported as Vagabonds.

Thirdly, That ſuch due Encouragement ſhall be given to the Exportation of home-diſtilled Spirits, as the Wiſdom of the Nation ſhall think fit.

Your

Your Activity, worthy Sir, in promoting theſe, or ſome ſuch Regulations, and adapting them to our preſent waſting Peſtilence, will do infinite Service to your bleeding Country, and immortalize your Name. If he, who ſaved the Life of but one Citizen among the *Romans*, was crown'd, what will that glorious Patriot deſerve, who reſtores the Religion and decay'd Virtue of his Country, and preſerves the Lives of many thouſands? The Voice of Nations ſhall, for ſuch Virtue, heap Bleſſings on your Head, and the Heads of all your Compatriots in this good Work. Nay, God will bleſs you, both here and to all Eternity. For we are told, that they who reſtore many to Righteouſneſs, ſhall ſhine as the Stars in the Firmament, for ever and ever.

That this may be your Glory, and the Glory of all your Aſſiſtants in this national and truly noble Cauſe, is the moſt hearty Prayer of,

SIR, 6. DE 58

Your moſt obedient,

and moſt humble Servant,

WILLIAM HENRY.